we are always prisoners

not far enough #4

Sometimes the words never come. Sentences dance around the cerebral cortex yet the synapses never coherently transport them to paper and only fragments appear. Defeat. Disappointment. I let myself down again.

notfarenoughneverenough

I originally intended not far enough to be a study on the parallels between the oppression of women and animals, but my mind constantly refuses to focus on any innovative ideas; instead I type other ecofeminists' conceptions. When I read various texts supporting the belief that we need to end abusing animals, both physically and contextually, in order to totally abolish the maltreatment of women, the written word empowers me. Right then, I want to write my suggestions, my thoughts. Unfortunately, I usually go downstairs first to get a cup of tea or cook some pasta. Then someone calls or drops by and after that, I realize someone should really do the dishes and so I set out to accomplish that menail task. By the time I sit down to write all the fervent ideas that previously ran rampant in my brain they have vanished.

Not only do I have to contend with my personal distractions, I'm lately having a difficult time concentrating on animal rights issues. I'm letting the animals down . . . however, I can justify my inactive tendencies since I appear to be redirecting all my attention to feminism and the many issues to which it pertains.. I don't necessarily buy that excuse, but I'll say it so I don't look too bad. (Just to prove my above point: I just went to eat and wasted half an hour, scanning the New York Times Crossword puzzle from Saturday's paper.)

Since releasing the first issue of not far enough, so many great women have approached me with their own stories

because these are my experiences. I don't share them because I want to attack men fortheir part in sexism. It takes two to tango, or so I've discovered. My intention is to share my experiences, so that others will offer their own . So far it is working well. Regrettably few men have spoken out. This absence saddens me, but not as much as the previously-mentioned reviewer's claim he felt isolated from what is written in not far enough. In no way do I consciously try to cut off men and I feel sorry for those who feel so, because I want both women and men to see the importance of sharing others experiences. Claims that one cannot enjoy something because they are not the same sex, colour, sexuality, etc. is a demonstration of the ignorant microcosm that person lives within.

Change can only occur if we make the effort to understand. It is time for the white male who cannot understand since white men are considered the least oppressed of all human beings to understand. That means stripping away that "white-male-can't-understand-can't respond" mentality. The excuse doesn't work anymore. It just sounds lame.

And so I react.

Each word we speak, each action we take is a reaction. With this in mind, I would like to respond to a recent review of not far enough. Unfortunately I haven't had the chance to read that review. Since my information is second-hand, I can't directly respond nor would I want to, but what I have heard opened new discussions I wish to explore.

I named the zine not far enough because I genuinely feel our society hides behind a mock notion that everything is fine now that women have the vote, women work in traditional male occupations, etc. This belief has left many blind to the existing problem that never seems to go away. Men and women continue to ignore each others gender concerns. I often wish this was untrue. But men and women simply have not gone far enough ahead to truly understand why there is sexual inequality.

I've fought against the division of boy things and girl things for long enough that such a concept seems too absurd to take sincerely. Although I understand many men cannot fully relate to the things I speak of in not far enough, the zine is not a girl thing. I speak about sexism and I speak about women's health and I speak of sexual assault,

and I realized that Halifax needed a zine that addressed sexism more than I had originally anticipated. It seems many of us share similar stories. . . unfortunately . . . stories of molestation and sexual assault. It takes a considerable amount of courage to rehash horrific experiences and I commend the women who conquer their doubts and speak out. In this issue, two women write about sexual assault, in some form. The three of us came together because we know what it's like to try and hide the pain yet we are each alone in our struggle to forget and move on. It hurts me to know so many women who've been maltreted at the hands of domineering men, but I know that I personally feel better about expressing my feelings, telling my story.

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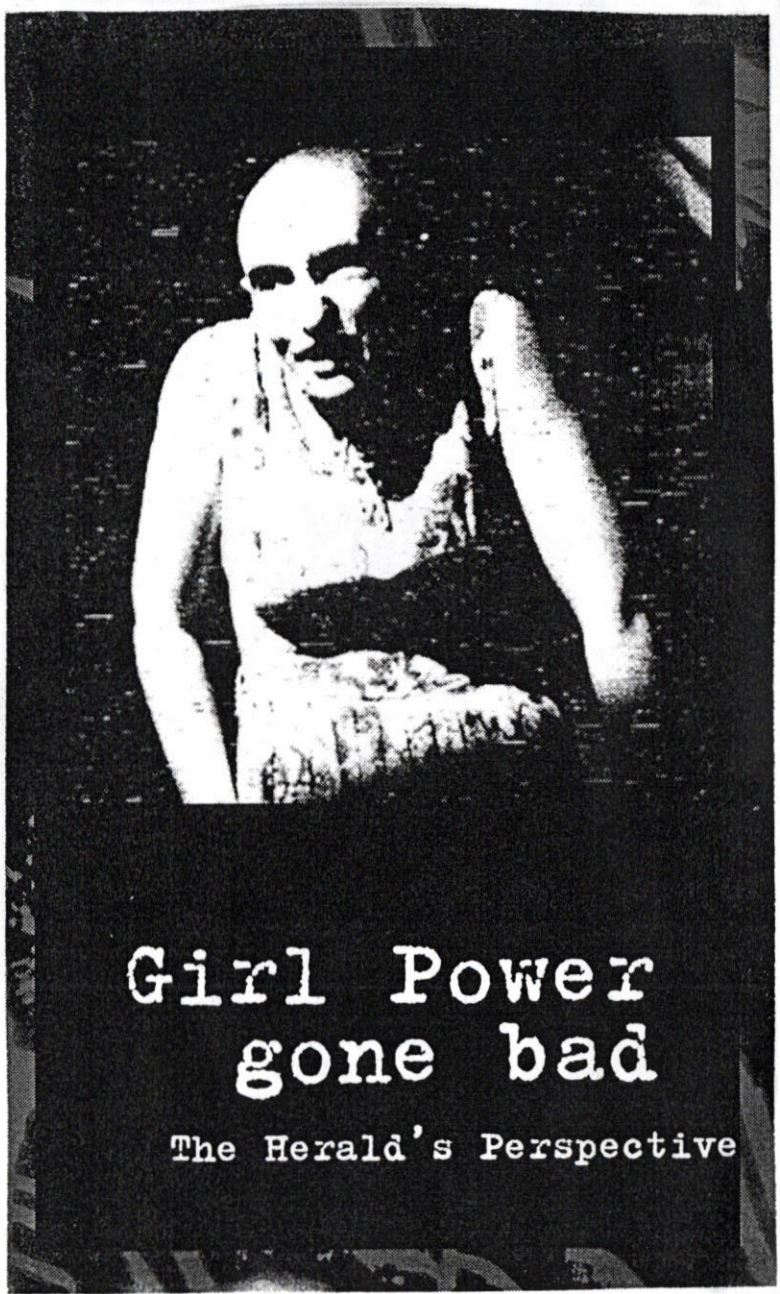
Experience-telling is undoubtedly one of the most effective ways of healing and for understanding. This summer, a group of us started a women's collective where we discuss various issues, including body image, relationship expectations, security of the person, you name it. Presently, men are discouraged to attend and although I realize this aggravates certain men who wish to share their perspectives on gender issues, the exclusion is necessary at this point in the collective's development. The no-male policy creates a less intimidating environment so the participating women can freely express themselves. Eventually I hope the collective will branch out to include both men and women, since change in the sexist state can only occur when both sexes equally work together. However, the women's collective is one step forward for women in Halifax.

Included in not far enough is a zine of its own although the writer doesn't accredit it as such.



Girl Power gone bad

The Herald's Perspective

some movies. It will be fun and we'll be alone."

I ran out of the car and rushed to the sanctuary of my home. I went to the reading room where both of my parents were resting, but my uncle followed me in. He sat down, picked up the newspaper and laughed aloud when he came upon an article about a Singaporean couple who was arrested for having sex. My parents were tired and left the room. I was left alone with my uncle. He badgered me about my reaction to the article. I don't think the government should regulate sex and I told him that. "But you were always an advanced child."

Not in my fucking home. Not with my parents home. Cocky bastard. So it has come to this. There is no more safety in my home, in broad daylight, and with everyone, including my parents, home with me.

The thought of that is so unbelievable that I went against my instincts and told myself that this episode was just the sleaziness of him showing again and it was nothing more. He had troubles with the air conditioner in his room later on that afternoon and asked me to help fix it. I did and while doing so, he came up from behind me. He fondled my breast, kissed the side of my face and whispered nasty things while slipping a $50 bill into my hand. There's no way I could ever describe how I felt at that moment. I froze in position while he slobbered all over my face. I remember his stubble brushing against my neck and it disgusts me to think about it even now. I don't know why I didn't do more, but I pushed him away and left the room.

I went into the bathroom and stayed there for several hours crying. I think my family noticed, but no one came. No one commented on my teary eyes and no one asked what was wrong.

I started ignoring my uncle again and no one noticed.

September of that year, I left home and went back to Columbus. When summer came, I went home to visit.

When I was home, so was my uncle. He was trying to live off my parents yet once again and stayed at our house a major part of my summer vacation. I don't know if he strategically plans this stop of his Mooch-off Tour to coincide with my return, but he is always there when I am. He stayed in the same room again, the one next to mine. I tried to hate him and never speak to him.

Sometimes when he gets out of the shower - with just a towel on his emaciated body- I want to kick his ass. I could fucking crush him. This man is no monster. He did a monstrous act by doing what he did to me many years ago, but he is not this untouchable being that I should be afraid of.

I felt like a bitch for feeling such animosity towards him. This particular summer, he did try to approach me. He was really nice and spoke to me like I was a human being whose opinions mattered, unlike my parents. Therein lies my mistake. I should never have made that comparison because I have fucked up parents.

I started to speak to him again. Slowly, I was even able to hang out with him that summer. Not once did he show signs of a child molester. I questioned my memory. I started to wonder if everything happened as I remembered or if I just transferred another person's story from the media to my mind.

My mom sent me to the store with him one day. I didn't want to go, but I let myself be pushed into doing it. In the car, I thought that he was being sleazy, but I couldn't pinpoint why I thought so. Getting out of the car at home, he said something about going to my aunt's house and that I should come along. "We could play video games and rent

— The Sunday Herald, August 2, 1998, p.C1.

Most people would agree that boys and girls don't operate on the same wave length.

The differences in male and female psychology have been a source of fascination for writers, poets and students of human nature throughout the ages.

The gender gulf is still a gold mine for pop psychologists, experts and ordinary fold: Witness the runaway success of books like Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus. Witness the way in which people peruse newspaper and magazine articles that explore the latest research on male and female behaviour, relationships, and why we all do the things we do.

The underlying assumption from time immemorial has been that the genders are different in more ways than one. Then, late in the 20th century, the scientific proof began to come to light. Apparently, male and female brains really are wired differently.

But researchers are also discovering similarities between the dark sides of men and women which are exploding the myth that women are by nature kinder and gentler -- sugar and spice and all that is nice.

The stereotype, for example, that boys are more aggressive is under attack.

Dr. John Archer, a psychologist at the University of Central Lancashire in Britain, has just completed an exhaustive review of dozens of studies on physical hostility in heterosexual relationships. His conclusion? That women are as likely to resort to physical violence as men during a dispute with a sexual partner. in fact, they may actually be more prone to slap, kick, bite or pick up a weapon.

Women remain, however, on the losing end when arguments explode into serious violence. Between 65 and 70 per cent of the patients who require medical care after a domestic incident are women.

Although they lack the sheer physical power to inflict as much damage as most men, women are the same in their basic instincts, the studies apparently show.

"The experts in human aggression are now aware that even in childhood the similarities between male and female patterns of aggression are more substantial than is usually recognized," The New York times said in an article on the subject last week.

Girls tend to specialize in what is now known as "indirect

aggression," inflicting harm through elaborate smear campaigns, gossip and verbal put-downs that often are just as intimidating to a victim as a clenched fist.

But some girls are also graduating to physical violence and gang beatings, a sad reality Canadians have woken up to through recent coverage of several high profile incidents.

There is no reason to panic yet. Young girls account for less than four per cent of the total charges for violent crime. Still, the number of girls charged with a violent offense in Canada has been increasing twice as fast over the last 10 years as the rate or their male counterparts.

What is happening here?

Perhaps the simple explanation is that girls are coming into their own. Slowly but surely, they are achieving equality with males throughout society and this manifesting itself in good and bad ways.

Because social mores have evolved drinking, swearing, smoking and promiscuity are longer male prerogatives. there's little left for so-called "bad girls" to do that can shock people. So why not brawl like boys.?

No one expected increased female violence to be a byproduct of women's liberation. But it is here, and the law must now begin punishing female offenders as severely as it would men.

Fuck, I didn't need to read that.

I innocently bought the Sunday Herald to catch up on the selective news reported in Halifax's newest and very much conservative Sunday paper and of course to do the paper's crossword puzzle, when the alarming headline, "Girl Power gone bad," immediately caught my attention. At first glance it looked like another sad tale abut the Spice Girls and although I don't normally concern myself with the doings and goings of the British pop band, I decided to read what the Halifax Sunday Herald had to say about them. But alas, it wasn't about the Spice Girls, it was yet another ignorant commentary on the increase of female violence in good ol' Canada and

Shaheera's Story

part 2

I moved to Columbus, Ohio when I was 11 years old. When I went back home with my family, I was 16 and fully aware that I had been molested as a child. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know if I should tell my family or just deal with it myself. I decided on the latter since I had already been doing that most of my life and I wasn't certain that my family would believe me.

I didn't know how I would react to seeing my uncle, who had molested me, again. I didn't know how I could face him. The bastard had no qualms about seeing me - no matter how grown-up or wise I could have been at that age. Not to mention the threat I posed to him should I tell. I noticed him while I was still in line at Customs. I passed the inspection long before the rest of my family did, but I didn't want to go to my uncle. I lingered at Customs and paced back and forth the entire time that my family was there.

When my family was done, everyone rushed to greet my uncle. I stayed back. I didn't look or talked to him. That's how things stayed that summer, even though my uncle stayed at my house and tried to live off my parents. Free to roam around and sleeping in the room next to mine. I couldn't believe his nerve.

I could feel him looking and smiling pleasantly at me at times, but he didn't try to talk to me. He never once approached me.

I thought that my growing up had something to do with that. Maybe he felt threatened by me. Maybe he changed. In

woman in general. I can't buy that argument. Slut means a slut. It's that simple. Plus most of the time, the woman is called a slut when that person is hanging around males.

Another area of great tension is the participation of women in music. Male musicians dominate bands; there are simply more men in bands than women in nearly every city's scene. Women often criticize the predominant imbalance of sexes involved, refusing to fall into the expected "girl-groupie" role. They start their own bands, they voice their own musical tastes, they write zines or for zines, they organize shows and they assert their right to stand in the front at shows. Yet it seems for some women these rights are reserved for a select few women. Outsiders beware.

At a recent concert, an out-of-town band brought three or four women with them. Their presence generated more discussion than necessary as both women and men made discourteous comments about them. I heard feminists ridicule them for helping the band out by carrying equipment, selling merchandise and enjoying the music when many stood by not knowing how to take this out-of-town band. These women had to listen to such sexist comments after driving in a van all day in the middle of the summer. They had driven across the continent, attending show after show with the band. Why shouldn't they help? And why should it matter whether or not they were women? Or should all women passively stand on the sidelines watching the men lift all the gear and merchandise? Or better, should they stand on the sidelines and bitch about the local women? I'm sure the "feminists" should appreciate that.

another plug pointing to the discrepancies between the male and female sexes. I should have expected this.

So, I guess men and women do not inherently "operate on the same wave length." Or so that's what everybody knows. Scientists and psychologists have proven it again and again and we must accept what they say as fact; an arts-kid like me can't argue against science after all. Fuck that. Whenever science is used to explain gender differences, I usually get my tail up in the air. Over the years that I have studied history, I have come to one conclusion in regards to science and its explanation of social conditions -- scientists use their esteemed knowledge to publicize their own personal beliefs.

For example, let's take the hysteria dilemma that followed women from Ancient Greece to nineteenth-century Victorian Canada. Male medical practitioners and scientists commonly diagnosed women with hysteria, a believed emotionally-based sexual disturbance, whenever women acted out of sorts, i.e. spoke out against routine rigid restrictions on their sex, continually cried out, fainted, etc. I don't have time to present an elaborate history of hysteria, but now historians/herstorians believe that many of the so-called symptoms were caused by the social conditions with which the women had to live . Instead of having a shifting uterus as scientists and doctors claimed, women acted emotionally because of the mental burden they had to carry with them. The women merely had break downs. (Or in many cases I'm sure, were just speaking their minds.) The scientific argument for hysteria, however, gave biological proof to the common belief that women were the weaker sex; they could not handle the political and intel-

lectual pressures men could endure because their uterus was always shifting around. Of course, over that extremely long period, the various societies lacked the resources to determine whether or not the uterus was shifting -- but men used it to further their sexual dominance.

And what about good ol' Freud. Sigmund Freud was indeed a very intelligent individual who opened many passageways to the understanding of sexuality, but just because someone is smart doesn't mean they know the truth. Freud routinely discredited women's incest stories to prove his own psychoanalytical theory of the oedipus complex and of women's envy of the penis. Freud believed that once girls recognize the anatomical distinctions between men and women, they start to yearn for a penis, to have something which they could never have. Because the girl realizes she will never have a penis, she then transfers her desire to her father who has a penis. This wish for an exclusive, vaguely sexual union with her father stimulates the girl's imagination so that she thinks she has had sex with her father. Again this analysis lacks much needed qualification, but it proves that Freud used science to undermine the tragic experience of incest, by reclassifying it as a hidden desire. Science. People believed it and women's incest stories were tossed aside.

The above article on girl power gone bad exhibits the contradictory nature of scientifically-explained social conditions. You see as soon as the Sunday Herald has announced science has proven the inherent differences between the female and male sexes, they then tell their readers that scientists are recently discovering that girls

critics. Feminism was already a confusing concept for those who believed and for those who are taught eachsex has its place in society. It doesn't help when the women advocating equality mirror traditional sexist attitudes.

But women are suppose to be at each others' throats. Isn't that what we are taught? Women are supposed to be scratching and clawing each other over petty differences. We're told that's the only way women can react to criticism. They call each other bitches. They call each other fat. They call each other sluts. Unfortunatley, women do this. Instead of joining together to change the sexist state, they forget why they're feminists; they want to abolish the unequal condition of their sex yet they continue to use labels the sexist state has held over women for too long.

The worst is slut. Nearly every day I hear a woman call another woman a slut in Halifax. I've never understood the intrigue of insulting women for their sexual activity, but it seems few women share my distaste. My sister too noticed the frequent use when she came to visit me for one weekend. Slut this. Slut that. That one weekend she heard the word more than she wished and it baffled her. She couldn't understand why "more-civilized, city women" would use such a sexually-degrading word when it was rarely mentioned among "uncultured hicks' from our small home town.

Slut has become so commonplace in many women's vocabulary that its offensivenss has diminshed. Those who say it have been co-opted to believe it is acceptable to call a woman a slut. But just think about what is being said: slut refers to "a sexually immoral woman," so everytime a woman is called a slut their sexuality is placed on trial. This is what feminists are supposed to be combating but many continue to advocate it. Many woman claim they never intended to cast moral judgment on the women they call a slut; they just use the word to criticize the

The Feminist Dilemma

So you wanna be equal. You don't wanna be just one of the girls anymore. You want to receive the respect you deserve. Become a feminist and join the fight for women's emancipation. Sisters unite. What do we want? Equality. When do we want it? Now. Girlz rule. Slag those girls who don't look like you. Criticize those who succumb to feminine stereotypes, i.e the make-up girl, the Neet girl, the fashion queen. Call her a slut. Call her fat, but don't you fuckin tell me I don't fit in, because I am a feminist and I can be anybody I want. You can't.

Did I piss you off yet? I'm pissed, have been for years. I hear it everyday, the same thing, over and over and over again -- feminists slagging women over inconsequential details. The same women who denounce the patriarchal hold on women (i.e. forcing women into traditional docile stereotypes, objectifying women, devaluing women's actions) behave no differently in many circumstances and in turn supports the sexist state against women. No wonder feminism has such a bad name. There is just too many people who lay claim to the moniker who never practise what they preach to others. Of course, this can be said of straight edge kids, skinheads, animal rights activists, environmentalists, etc, but since women form just slightly over 50 per cent of the world's population, it seems so much more prevalent, but this should not license its existence.

The minor disputes over who is best defying the "patriarchy"has been the major downfall of the second wave feminist movement since the 1970s. Such insignificant discrepancies have laid the hypocritical foundation of the women's movement as we know it, leaving poor, lasting impressions on sceptics and

aren't as good as we all thought they were - no more sugar and spice or so they say. Well how can this be so if science has already dictated females behave in a certain way. Since the editorial staff must not have asked the scientists this and instead blindly excepted what the press release must have said, they decided to derive their own unqualified explanation. Must be that damn women's liberation movement. If women didn't want to be equal, then we could continue to write them off as submissive, docile creatures. Now girls are in fact becoming more like boys, god forbid. They're killing people, slapping their husbands and boyfriends, and joining gangs. What's the world coming to? We might as well blow the goddamn planet up.

But hey "there is no reason to panic yet." Science will somehow find a way to stop these raging aggressive girls from becoming equals with the aggressive males who have ruled over women for centuries and centuries, who have raped and murdered sexual partners over trivialities, who have killed women in order to protect their own aggressive honour, who have raised their hands for not getting the meals on the table quick enough. Must I go on.

The Sunday Herald editorial staff tried to present a clever argument, but instead they capitalized on petty taboos. Instead of trying to shed light on the psychological makeup of the women who commit four per cent of all violent crimes, the staff should have tackled the more important question - why do men commit 96 per cent of violent crimes. Has society ever tried to understand that.

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I knew this girl who at the age of 17 had already undergone two abortions as a result from having a fucked-up boyfriend who refused to wear a condom. She had previously tried the pill but the ejection of additional hormones turned this girl into a nervous wreck. The pill destabilized years of trying to forget the shadows hiding in her closet. They made her cry. She couldn' t handle the effect on her body and even more on her mind so after a three-month period she neglected to renew her subscription or to see her gynecologist. She became pregnant. Her boyfriend, despite his misgivings, showed remorse that his lover would have to experience the traumatic procedures of an abortion. But there were no other option for her. This girl did not want to carry a child inside her for the nine-month duration. She was young. Her mom would kick her out. Her father' s home was not an option. She would never go back, or so she had said. She managed to secure an abortion in the small-town hospital where she was living.

She did it. She cried as the blood dripped. Was it over, she thought, later in her small bedroom in her mom' s house. Months past and she refused to have sex with her boyfriend. Her pregnancy and its cessation

Hot Pantz: Do it Yourself Gynecology:

I can't classify this as a book or a zine. It combines both ideas to form an amazing briefing on d.i.y gynecology. Originally printed in French in 1994, this book crams everything you need to know and LONG THIN BOOKLET. Because it is so thin, you can carry it around with you in case you ever need to refer to any herbal menstrual relief remedies or to any STD and STI symptoms. For those who have studied herbal remedies to menstruation, there isn't much new in it, but it's a great resource material. Hot Pantz introduces the subject by explaining the female reproductive system -- you gotta know what's there to understand it -- and then describes all that can go wrong and what to do with it. I bought it at the Submission Hold show, but the back page recommends anybody to reproduce it. When I come up with the cash, i'll definitely do so.

I hate you 'zine

Maco recently received I hate you #7 from Jen Hate. He has been corresponding with her for awhile and a couple months ago he ordered #6. It was good, but #7 rocks. Lately, I've been reading zines laden with straight forward, not-very-original dogmatic articles, so it was a relief to read something straight from the writer's heart and mind. In much detail, jen hate tells a recent personal story of the sexual expectations too often placed on women in the punk and hardcore scene by men involved and the disappointments of losing a friend over such maschoistic realities. I nearly cried. The story hits you hard, but women can pull through the murky sexist occurrences. . . jen hate can.

Book Reviews

It's hard to find stuff to review that doesn't in anyway reflect the life of Emma Goldman. Since Spencer has lent me another biography on her and a copy of Anarchism and Other Essays, I've set aside everything else in my reading pile. I really should spread to more topics, but I find few things more rewarding than studying one topic until I feel totally confident in my ability to speak about it. But in the past month, I've read or bought or received or found quite a few good books. Most are Russian literature -- my and Maco's literary drug -- but I could not justly review the works of Dostoevsky and Solzhenitsyn ; you just have to read them for yourself. I recommend anything by the two.

Thanks to Steve's book distro at the Submission Hold show, I think a lot of kids have new reading material. I only wished I could have bought more books, but dammit I wanted a t-shirt too. This town sorely needs access to alternative literature especially since the demise of Red Herring Co-Operative Bookstore .

However, I recently heard that Dana from the Bike Shop and Robert from the Free Food Gang are trying to distro IWW literature, Love and Rage and other anarchist publications. That is very good.

I've always meant to review books in nfe, but I always delayed writing them until it was too late. But in lieu of all the books now in my possession, I made sure I wrote something. Here it goes.

turned her off from sexual intercourse. But she loved her boyfriend and he would plead for her to submit to his cravings. Of course he still wouldn't wear a condom.

They eventually moved in together. Her mom didn't want her around anymore. The first night, they curled up together in bed and he began to rub her back. For once in her life everything felt right. Was she finally freed from her past? The next night, her boyfriend forced her to fuck him. No condom. She became pregnant. She left her boyfriend after finding out that while she was readjusting from the abortion, he had been fucking many of her friends and acquaintances. She didn't know who she could trust. About this time I met her, but she later told me she didn't want me to know. She had another abortion.

We quickly became great friends. I fell in love with her overwhelming generosity and her smile. (She had nothing to smile about really, but she never let any of the shit get her down.) One night we were sitting around and the topic of abortion came up. I had earlier in my life decided that a woman should have complete control over her body but for reasons still unknown, I ignorantly said "abortion should not be a form of birth control." I don't know what made me say such a cruel statement. I knew when I had said it that I didn't mean it. It was just one of those things that you hear so much, it becomes commonplace to say. Sort of like "how are you?" My beautiful friend looked at me and started to cry. She left the apartment we were hanging out at and refused to answer my calls for a few days. I immediatley regretted saying what I did. I assumed I had just offended her feminist beliefs. Later I discovered why.

I don't know why I'm telling this story. It's really not my place to tell another woman's very personal story, but I did a extremely stupid thing. I reiterated jargon without thinking or without supporting it. I said something that sounded right when I knew deep down that it wasn't.

I hurt her.

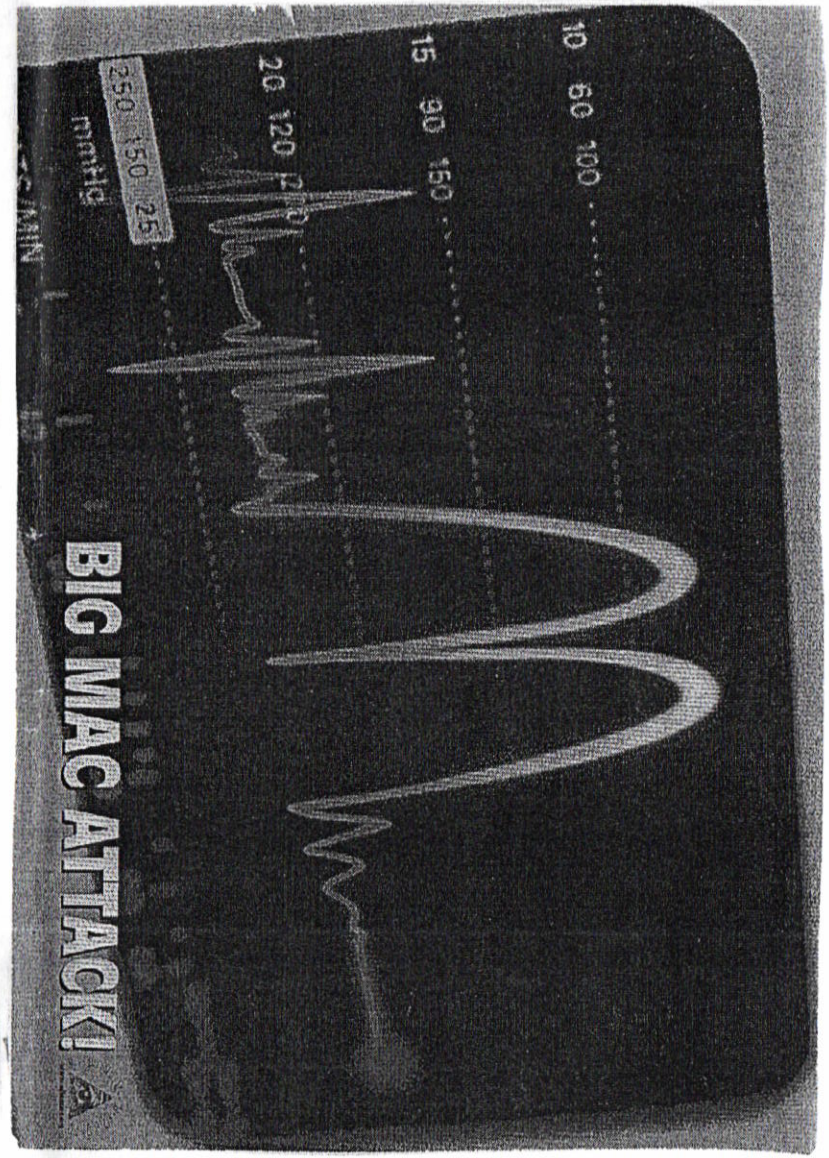
For awhile now I've wanted to write something for not far enough. I guess you could say I wanted to give back to something that has given me so much. It's been hard finding something worthy and relevant to write about but after reading Shaheera's and Erin's stories, I have borrowed the courage to share mine.

The short, easy-to-digest version is this -- last May (1997) I was sexually assaulted in the Valley by the son of the local preacher. Putting it like that feels good, to make it sound so inconsequential. I wish I could say it feels that way, but it doesn't. I thought it was my fault that he pinned me to the floor of his car and ripped my clothes off. I was certain it was my fault that I couldn't scream when he told me what he was going to do to me. It had to have been my fault, after all, he told me I wanted it and that he was doing this for me.

Because I thought it was my fault, I didn't tell anyone for awhile. Later in the summer I began to talk about it with some close friends. I wanted to believe them when they said that it wasn't my fault and that I shouldn't feel dirty, worthless or responsible. I wanted to believe them, but until only recently, I know I didn't.

And then it seemed to go away. For a few months, I never thought about it and it never got brought up. Then I started having dreams about it. When I'd wake up crying and screaming, I'd just tell my Mom and brother I was having a nightmare. Since I hadn't (and still have not) told either of them or any proper "authorities," everyone believed me.

Since I could now rarely sleep without having "the



"Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person; having neither to weigh thoughts nor to measure words but to pour them all out, just as it is, chaff and grain together, knowing that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keeping what is worth keeping, and then, with the breadth of kindness, blow the rest away.

George Eliot

Women's collective meets every second Sunday.
For more information, call 423-3343.

dream," I knew I had to get some help. I started talking more to some other women (older than myself) about that kind of thing. When the first not far enough came out, I was incredibly moved by Erin's strength in speaking so openly about things I had been surpressing and trying futilely to forget about myself.

This is getting long, sorry. I know this was supposed to be my story, but there is more to be said than just that. I want to thank all the strong women who have taught me so much about life, power, pride and myself. Thank you to all my friends who have been there for me and given me their time, ears, advice and strength. There is one group I have to thank who I feel too rarely get the recognition they deserve. Thank you to the amazing, caring, understanding men in my life, who stand as constant reminders of the good things in my world.

I have been so lucky to have some many people to lean on. I don't know where I would be without them. If there were more people like them around to talk to, there would be a lot more survivors of assault than victims.

The best advice I can offer to anyone who has been through something similar is to rid yourself of the guilt by talking to someone you trust or writing it down. Don't blame yourself and don't be ashamed.

That's my story, thank you for reading it. If you want to talk with me about it, feel free to come to me.

Thanks again, Adrienne.

One month ago, the increasing political enthusiasm amidst the punk and hardcore scene in Halifax convinced me to stay in Halifax. Since I moved to the city four years ago, I've searched for pro-active collectives where I could release all the political energy that had accumulated over time in my politically-inactive hometown, Windsor. It took longer than I had expected. My assumption that the city must be more receptive to change was wrong. Halifax just had more people and more shows. People tried to convince me that Halifax lacked any political consciousness and that any attempt to arouse feminist or animal rights sentiment would result in defeat. At first I took their word for it, but I soon realized that if I wanted to find something that suited my political demands, I had to follow the examples of those in Halifax who went out of their fucking way to keep punk and hardcore alive in this deadbeat town. I didn't want to join the sit-back-and-bitch crews that too often exist in any societal circle, so I started my crusade to stimulate progressive discussions concerning animal rights and feminism. Within the past year, I've co-organized with many incredibly spirited people a Food Not Bombs chapter and a women's collective. Last month, coinciding with the great response to the Submission Hold show, I decided after much deliberation there was too much potential in this city to walk away from it. I opted to stay.

I'm already **regretting** my decision.

Enchiladas

Sauce:
1 8 oz. can tomato sauce
1 ½ cups water
1 large onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 Tbs. chili powder
½ tsp ground cumin
½ tsp oregano
2 tbsp. cornstarch, dissolved in
¼ cup water

Filling:
1 lb. firm tofu, crumbled
1 medium onion, diced
½ tsp. chili powder
¼ tsp. cumin
¼ tsp. garlic powder
¼ tsp. black pepper
½ c. picante sauce
2 c. steamed spinach
12 corn tortillas

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. For the sauce, place all ingredients except the cornstarch mixture in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer for 20 min. Add the mixture. Cook, stirring until thickened. While the sauce is simmering, prepare filling by combining tofu, onion, chili powder, pepper and picante sauce. Put a small layer of spinach down the centre of each tortilla. Fill tortilla and roll. Line 13" x9" baking dish with filled, rolled tortillas. Top with sauce and bake for 20-25 min or until bubbling.

My chili -- yum yum

Cut up one large onion, two medium-sized potatoes (don't cut them too thick otherwise they don't cook all the way), and one medium zucchini and toss it into a pot with a bit if olive oil. Sauté. Mince five (more or less) cloves of garlic and add to frying vegetables. Throw in a handful of mushrooms and half a can of corn kernels.

Once the vegetables appear somewhat tender, add a can of tomatoes (crushed or whole), a few tablespoons of tomato paste and a cup of cooked beans (black or kidney). Stir and lower heat to simmer. Add the following spices at your own discretion: chili powder, cumin, cayenne pepper, pepper, coriander, and salt. Let simmer for as long as your bellies can wait and eat.

Every revolution should start off with a bowl of chili, to heat the dissident flames within the participants. Well, I'm sure others would disagree since most people are apt to protest more fervently when there stomachs are empty, but dammit if I had any say, I would be feeding all the revolutionaries out there chili.

This issue, I've chosen a mexican-cuisine. Most of the following recipes come from Lisa from People for Animal Welfare, but I've added a made-on-the spot recipe for the chili that I usually make. Normally, I mindlessly toss in the spices since I have a high tolerance for spicy food. You can decide how much to include. You are your own creators.

Fajitas

½ lb. tempeh, sliced into long strips (about 1/2" wide and 2" long)
1 Tbs. olive oil or water
1 large onion, thinly sliced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 each: red, green and yellow bell peppers, cut into thin strips
1 ½ tsp. cumin
½ tsp oregano
½ tsp. paprika
½ tsp. salt
1 tsp. chili powder
pinch cayenne
4 flour tortillas
1 tomato chopped
shredded lettuce to taste

Sauté onion, garlic and peppers in oil or water for 3 min. Add cloves and tempeh, stir well and cook another 5 minutes. Add water, cover, reduce to a simmer, and cook until tender, about 10 min. Spoon mix down centre of tortillas. Top with lettuce and tomato. Fold the edges of tortilla over filling and secure with a toothpick.

Easy Mild Salsa

1 ½ cups chopped tomatoes
½ cup minced red onion
½ cup minced red bell pepper
½ cup minced green bell pepper
2 Tbs. minced cilantro
2 garlic cloves, minced
4 Tbs. olive oil
Chili powder and cayenne

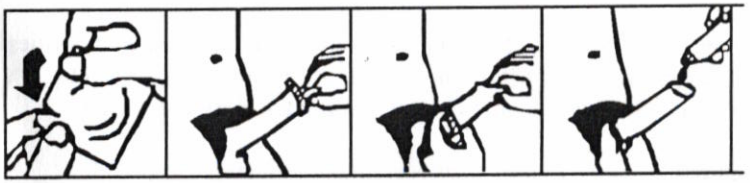
Combine the tomatoes, onion, cilantro and garlic in a medium bowl. Stir in oil, chili powder and cayenne to taste. Yields 2 ½ to 3 cups

I constantly crave political feedback. Last month, I was in bliss. Every day I'd have an incredible discussion with somebody that would challenge standard beliefs and would try to create solutions. The living room in the Ice Edge apartment soon developed into a meeting place for many who wanted to stir shit up. Lionel form PEI came and stayed for a couple of days around the time of the Submission Hold show. He brought with him a new slew of pamphlets never distributed in Halifax (I must return the originals) and inspired me with the political actions taken place in Charlottetown. If people can do stuff in Charlottetown, then we can do so much in the larger city of Halifax. One night, Lionel and I stayed up rather late, talking about various things, including the rising political awareness in Halifax. He commented on how positive it sounded and I nodded in agreement. I remember telling him "there is so many great things happening in Halifax. it's never been better." So many people were working together to create an open environment in the punk and hardcore. Women were constantly approaching me asking when the next women's meeting was and sharing all these incredible ideas to generate more feedback from women and men on women's issues. We started having FNB events on a weekly basis.

The bliss quickly reverted to disappointment.

Enthusiam has dulled. Personal vendettas are more prevalent than political determination. Everybody's shitting on everybody. I too have fallen victim to this petty lifestyle, but it has to stop. We are wasting too much energy that could be used productively to create a strong d.i.y underground movement and to encourage direct political action. I understand that a lot of people are caught up in determining who is right and who is better and it's difficult to see past these trivialities, but there simply lacks any truth to any of it.

We all suck.



Women's Rights Under Attack In Iran

On April 24, 1998 the Sisterhood is Global Institute issued an alert about the bills introduced in the Majilis, the Parliament of Islamic Republic of Iran to segregate hospital care, to forbid using pictures of women on the front pages of Iranian publications and, more importantly to curtail discussions of women's rights ouside the shari`a.

SIGI has since received new disturbing information about statements made by certain members of the Islamic Assembly that further jeopardize the security of women working for the promotion of human rights in Iran. Recently, the Majilis made public a statement by Representative Ms. Marzieh Wahid Dastjerdi in defense of a proposal that makes any criticism of laws that discriminate against women's human rights illegal. In her speech Ms. Dastjerdi used excerpts from well-known articles by Mehrangiz Kar and Shirin Ebadi, two prominent women lawyers working for women's rights in Iran.

After reading from the articles on the floor of the Assembly, Ms. Dastjerdi said, "If you [members of the Majilis] do not pass this bill, we will take care of them [women activists] ourselves."

Given the present charged political atmosphere in Iran, such a statement transgresses the its of parliamentary debate and may be construed as a direct provocation of the extremists and religious zealots to act against the two lawyers.

It is unfortunate that such an obviously inflammatory statement was allowed to be made in the Assembly; it is unconscionable that it was made public by the leadership of the Assembly.

If this pisses you off, SIGI wants you to write to the Iranian authorities expressing your support for the women of Iran and urging them to rescind these laws which will reinforce gender apartheid in Iran.

Addresses: Hojjatoleslam Mohammed Khatami,

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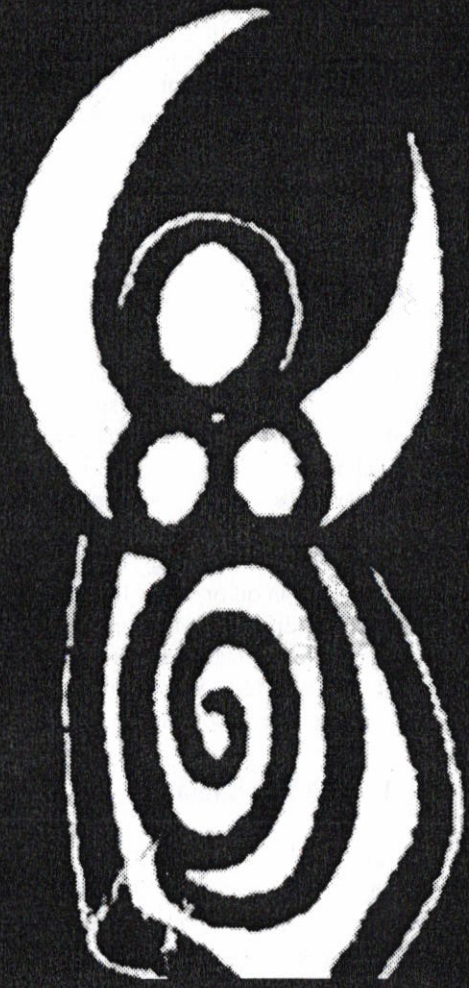

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I was walking home with Erin one evening, when she approched me about writting samthing for her zine. I was like "Wow! That would be really cool." But then I thought what the hell would I write about? So I told her that I would try but I would not promise her anything. So the wheels started to turn. Like everybody else, Ive had my share of fucked up things happen to me, and I envy people who can openly talk to strangers about these events but I guess Im a more private person (or maybe there is just alot of things I haven't gotten over yet? I dunno Im not a head doctor just a head case. HA HA

This experience has changed my life and my perspective on it. It gave me something to love and care for so helped me to care for myself in the process. I don't encourage any teen to run out and get preqnant, but if it happens to you and you really want it to work, don't listen to all the people who say you can't or your wasting your life, because it is not the end, just the beginning of a diffrent stage. And if you are strong the struggle is worth it.

By Sonya Vincent-Ferrier

The doctor told me that I tore badly up two sides of my vaginal passage and needed stiches. So I got stitched up and brought down to the recovery room where I showered and packed my bag. I wanted to go home. The doctors found out that Savana had a heart murmur and had us stay overnight to do some tests. That was all very frightening but the murmur closed up and we were aloud to go home at last.

This story has taken up enough time. It was long but could been much longer so be thankful it wasn't.

So I thought what is the most significant event that has happened in my life that I would like to write about, and the readers of Erin's Zine would be intrested in reading? Then it came to me, thats easy enough. The most important thing in my life are my children. So I guess I will start with the birth of my first child.

I met Andy in october of 94' and we started dating at once. We had more of a lets hangg out, get drunk and Fuck, relationship than anything else. And that is exactly what we did for the first two months of our so called "relationship".

(that was all my fault of course, I kept him at a distance because my heart was in other places.) When my blind fold was removed and my heart set free, I came to realize what an awsome person I was with and I let him know how I felt. which was all perfect timing because not even a week later I noticed that my body was changing my breast were getting very tender and I started to puke all the time SOMETHING WAS WRONG

I went to the pharmacy and had a pregnancy test done and Suprise Suprise all of our immature lack of protection had caught up with us and I was one month pregnant. I felt as if I were in a dream. Andy was very suportive and let me know that he would go through it with me and that we'd make everything work. It was a good feeling to

And so I started to push and push and push, it took 15 minutes for the baby to come out, and when it did it was such a relief

no pain remained. I just sat up and watched the thing that just came out of me, cry. Wow what an amazing moment. I now had a baby girl named Savana Unity. I just wanted to hold her. but they took her away to get her cleaned up and evaluate her heart breathing and reflex. Everybody left me to go see the baby.

was moved without my knowledge and I panicked. The pain was unbearable, everything was happening so quickly. I did not notice the lights come on or everybody running around. I just screamed in pain and fear

This amount of pain was so foreign to me, it felt as if I were going to die. A nurse handed me the laughing gas mask and I started huffing. The mask didn't help with the pain but it gave me something to concentrate on.

know that I wasn't alone. But then **Snap!** back to reality how to tell the parents.

Befor I go on let me tell you about my home situation. My parents are bikers, I've attended more parties than I can remember so you would assume my parents were the easy going care free type and I guess they were except where I was concerned. So when I told my parents that I was pregnant they sat Andy and I down and basically told us that we couldn't do it on our own, Andy had been threatened to do right by me (even though that was his intentions all along). I was not asked how I felt and when my mom said "Sonya, there are other options" and I replied "no, not for me" saying she was pissed would be an understatement

So we were to be young parents, how would we make it in this world? The two people who had been discouraging me, were my role models. My parents gave birth to my brother at the young ripe age of 16. That's right folks I'm not the only person who has ever screwed up.

Andy quit school and found a job. I graduated and we found a place of our own and moved out.

I was due August 22nd and that summer was a hot one. I went from 120lbs to 154lbs. So when my due date came around I was more than ready. Then day by day my due date past. Then one week then two.

After that the feeling passed I was just really high. I stumbled to the washroom to pee and then back to bed where I had a permanent smile plastered to my face. Andy's and my mothers face floated above my head and I fell into a deep sleep.

I awoke a couple of hours later, the room was dark and my mom was standing next to my bed. I told her "I feel like I have to take a poo but out of the wrong end." she ran to get a nurse. When she left the room I had the sudden urge to push. I tried to find the buzzer for the nurse but it

Afterwards I bled and was really sore.

I was then sent home. and the Prostaglandin E_2 started to make my cervix contract, they lasted for a couple of hours and then stopped.

Andy and my parents drove me to the hospital for the second application at 11:00 PM. The contractions started at once.

At home again everybody went to sleep. I tried but my contrachions were getting stronger and closer together. I tried walking around but everytime I had a contraction I had to sit on the floor. I was now **Ready To Go** back to the hospital.

I tried to wake Andy (he is a very deep sleeper, and is usually very confused when woken.) When I told him that my contractions were starting to hurt, he told me to go back to sleep. So I decided to wake my parents up first. They woke up immediately and started getting ready. I got Andy out of bed and when he was half dressed he asked me "what are we doing again?". I started to make him peanut butter and jam sandwichs to take to the hospital and I packed 5 peaches and 4 cans of coke. My mom thought I was cracking up. I was just put into a weird state of mind.

We arrived at the hospital for 2:00 AM, by then I was getting really tired so I had a long hot bath and tried to sleep. My contractions keept me from sleeping, and I became very irritable. The pain was becoming more intense.

At 4:00 AM a nurse suggested that I have a shot of Demerol to help me sleep so that once hard labour set in I would have the energy to push. It soundd like a good idea so I took the shot. I puked in about 30 seconds and started having muscle spasms throughout my whole body. It brought me back to a time I O.D. on pills, it made me feel really gross.

I went to the hospital of September 5th to have an ultrasound and see how the baby is doing. Usually after a woman is two weeks over due they will induse her labour because of complications. So the decision was made by that time the next day I would be a mother. Now the reality of the situation was sinking in.

The induction of labour starts by having two applications of a gell called Prostaglandin E2, it is inserted into the cervix to ripen it. It will help to dialate quicker and easyier. The pain was unexpected. The doctor first inserted his fingers into my vagina, dug around for a good grip on my cervix then insorted a plastic applicator applying the gel. I just stared at the ceiling and cryed.